

Secretary Babbitt: I told – to the best of my recollection, I said something to Mr. Eckstein to the effect that Mr. Ickes expected or wanted a decision.⁶⁵⁴

Chairman Thompson: . . . Are you saying that you were not correcting the record, more or less, with the letter to me?

Secretary Babbitt: Senator, I believe those statements are consistent. They both reflect my best recollection of what I said and what I didn't say.⁶⁵⁵

Later, Sen. Lieberman tried to explore the same concern that Sen. Thompson's questions expressed. Lieberman accepted Babbitt's explanation, but not without observing that "your statement to Senator McCain . . . looks like it goes to a total denial of Mr. Eckstein's recollection that you even mentioned Ickes. . . ."⁶⁵⁶

Sen. Lieberman: Now, why would you – why – why – I presume that what you were saying in your letter to Chairman Thompson was that you had not really quite spoken the truth to Senator McCain – or let me put it another way, that on further reflection, you had changed your recollection of that meeting.

So help me – us understand what the difference is.

Secretary Babbitt: My response to Senator McCain is - - is precise and correct. It goes to the question that Senator McCain asked, did you ever talk to Harold Ickes, did Harold Ickes ever talk to you, and the answer is no.

Now, what I am attempting to do is, obviously, to ask myself what might have been said that gave Mr. Eckstein some kind of impression, and the best that I can do is to think that, Yes, I probably did say something to the effect

⁶⁵⁴*Id.* at 245.

⁶⁵⁵*Id.* at 245.

⁶⁵⁶*Id.* at 264.